

CIVILIAN CONNECTION

Issue #22

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

OCT 2005

AUTOMATED ATTENDANT VOICE SYSTEM: DSN 273-4700 OR 1-800-645-9416 (x4700)



ETHNIC AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

15 SEP - 15 OCT 2005:

Hispanic Heritage Month,

Theme: *"Hispanic Americans:
Strong and Colorful Threads in
the American Fabric"*

**1-31 OCT 2005: National
Disability Employment
Awareness Month**

**1-30 NOV 2005: American
Indian/Alaskan Native
Heritage Month**

NEW TSP LIFECYCLE FUNDS NOW AVAILABLE

(Best Newsletter, Aug 05):

The new Thrift Savings Plan
(TSP) lifecycle (L) funds may

be "just what the doctor
ordered" for most
participants - perhaps even
more so for those who do not
have the time or knowledge
to manage their accounts.

What are the L Funds? Well,
they're not really new funds.
Instead, they are "target
asset allocation funds."

There are five L Funds. Each
contains a mix of various
percentages of the
Government Securities
Investment (G) Fund, Fixed
Income Index Investment (F)
Fund, Common Stock Index
Investment (C) Fund, Small
Capitalization Stock Index
Investment (S) Fund, and
International Stock Index
Investment (I) Fund. The
investment mix is
professionally determined
based on a participant's
target "time horizon," i.e., the
expected date of
withdrawal of funds from the
TSP account.

The five L Funds are the
L2040, L2030, L2020, L2010,
and L Income. Those who
plan to withdraw beginning
2025 through 2034 will select
the L2030; beginning 2015
through 2024, the L2020; 2008
through 2014, the L2010, and
those who plan to withdraw

beginning sooner than 2008
or who are already
receiving monthly
payments, the L Income.

As the withdrawal date
approaches, the L Fund's
investment mix
automatically becomes
more conservative (i.e., less
risky). Participants who
select lifecycle funds do
not need to reallocate their
account assets to achieve
this result; the lifecycle
investment models
automatically reallocate
the accounts for them.

The objective of the L Funds
is to provide the highest
possible rate of return for
the amount of risk taken.
However, investing in the L
Funds is not a guarantee
against loss and does not
eliminate risk. The L Funds
are subject to the risks
inherent in the underlying
funds, and can have
periods of gain and loss.

You can invest in an L Fund
by (1) changing your
current contribution
allocation (how future
contributions are invested);
and (2) by completing an
interfund transfer to move
your existing account
balance into the selected L

Fund. Contribution allocations and interfund transfers are made directly via the TSP website at <http://www.tsp.gov> (under Account Access), or the automated ThriftLine: 1-877-968-3778 (toll-free), or 1-404-233-4400 if located outside the United States (not toll-free). These transactions can be submitted at any time. There are no extra fees or expenses associated with investment in the L Funds.

Please take time to review the wealth of information on the L-Funds that is available on the TSP website. In addition, the TSP will be mailing each participant a specially-made DVD that explains the details of the new L Funds, so remember to check your mailbox. Participants should carefully review all information before making a decision.

Calendar of Events

FEHB Open Season: 14 Nov - 12 Dec 05

FSA Open Season: 14 Nov - 12 Dec 05

TSP Catch-Up Contribution Enrollment for Calendar Year 2006 - available beginning 11 Dec 05

TSP CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

YEAR	TSP LIMITS		IRS LIMITS		
	FERS	CSRS	Regular Contributions	Catch-Up Contributions	Total Contributions
2005	15%	10%	\$14,000	\$4,000	\$18,000
2006 and thereafter	Limits eliminated		\$15,000	\$5,000 *	\$20,000
* After 2005, this amount will be subject to increases to reflect inflation.					

OPM Announces Plans for Start of Dental and Vision Benefits

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management said dental and vision benefits will be available to federal employees and federal retirees in Dec 2006, following an Open Season to begin that autumn.

As required by the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Benefits Enhancement Act of 2004, OPM is making dental and vision benefits available to individuals by December 2006. Eligible individuals will be able to choose benefits that cover dental care, vision care, or both. In addition, coverage can be elected for the enrollee only, the enrollee plus one other person, or the enrollee and his or her family.

More information will be made available next year.

OPM Announces Smallest Average FEHB Premium Increase in Nine Years

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced an average premium increase of 6.6 percent in the 2006 Federal Employees Health Benefits

Program. The single-digit average increase for the nation's largest employer-sponsored health program, which covers approximately 8 million current and retired federal employees, as well as their dependents, is the smallest in nine years and continues a trend of four consecutive years of declining average premium hikes.

While the 2006 total average premium increase is 6.6 percent, 80 percent of FEHB enrollees are currently covered by plans in which premiums will rise between 2.5 percent and 15 percent.

An Open Season will be held government wide from Nov 14 through Dec 12, 2005. During this period, employees can review printed and online materials to compare the coverage and costs of health plans and make changes based on their personal needs. Health plan brochures will be available at agencies for review by employees; employees and retirees can view the information on line at www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.asp.

QUICK LINKS

www.TSP.gov
www.DFAS.mil
www.OPM.gov
www.FIRSTGOV.gov
www.DEFENSELINK.mil
www.AF.mil
www.My.AF.Mil
www.TheWorkNumber.com
<https://MyPay.dfas.mil/>
<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>

ALL ABOUT FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

FSAFEDS is pleased to announce several enhancements that promise to benefit all participants.

1) Grace period implemented for incurring eligible expenses!

You now have until Mar 15 of the following year to incur eligible expenses for the current Plan Year. While this does not eliminate the use-it-or-lose-it rule completely, you now have a great advantage to avoid forfeiting unused funds.

If you have a balance remaining in your Health and/or Dependent Care FSA account as of Dec 31, you can use those funds for eligible expenses incurred from Jan 1 through Mar 15 of the following year. This is effective immediately, so for the 2005 Plan Year, you have until Mar 15, 2006 to incur

eligible expenses. And, if your 2005 balance is not sufficient to reimburse you in full for expenses incurred through Mar 15, 2006, the unpaid balance will be paid out of your 2006 account if you re-enrolled during Open Season. If you do not re-enroll, you cannot be reimbursed in full for those expenses.

2) Deadline extended for submitting eligible expenses to FSAFEDS!

The deadline for submitting claims for eligible expenses has been pushed back to accommodate the grace period change. You now have until May 31 following the end of the Plan Year to submit claims for eligible expenses you incurred through Mar 15.

3) Health Care FSA maximum increased for 2006!

The Health Care FSA maximum contribution for 2006 will be \$5,000 -- that's a \$1,000 increase in the pre-tax amount. This change is effective for the 2006 Plan Year and does not apply to your current 2005 account. Remember, to take advantage of this new maximum, you must re-enroll for the 2006 Plan Year.

For more information on FSA, visit their website at: <https://www.fsafeds.com>, or call toll-free: 1-877-FSAFEDS (372-3337).



VERIFY YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Pending the finalization of the "BRAC" list, we advise all employees to review their automated personnel folder at

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> to ensure all

education, training, experience, service computation date (SCD), veterans' preference, etc., are accurate. Do not wait until a Transfer of Function or Reduction in Force has been initiated to review this information. Be proactive in ensuring your automated record is correct. Contact the Staffing Branch at DSN 273-4081 if you have any questions.

VETERANS PREFERENCE DOCUMENTATION FOR RIF

All current Federal Employees requesting a change to their veteran's

preference will provide to their local Civilian Personnel Office the following required document(s) to support the change in Veterans Preference for RIF.

- DD-214, member 4 copy or copy that reflects the character of service
- VA Disability Letter: letter dated 1991 or later as proof of a permanent disability, unless the letter specifically states that the disability is temporary.
- SF-15: a completed application for 10 Point Veteran Preference

If the document(s) support the change in Veteran's Preference for RIF, an RPA will be submitted to generate an SF-50 to update block 26, and only then will Veteran's Preference, block 23, be updated.

References: Vet Guide
<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>

ACCESS TO YOUR OWN "CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE CAREER BRIEF"

Current Federal Civilian Employees may access and print their own Civilian Employee Career Brief (Promotion Brief) from the AFPC web site. Click on <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecure/default.asp>

This is the electronic connection to your employee data that resides in the Air Force Personnel system. From the referenced links you can access your information by each section or print the brief in its entirety.

To update your records, contact your Civilian Personnel Office for instructions at DSN 273-4081.



FISCAL YEAR TRAINING CLOSEOUTS

The Civilian Personnel Training Office is tasked by Headquarters Air Force to ensure that all FY05 training files are closed out NLT 15 Nov 05. To meet this suspense date, employees who have attended training in FY05 (training from 01 Oct 04 to 30 Sep 05) must ensure that all required documentation is submitted to the CPO Training Office as soon as possible.

Training files should normally be closed out within 45 days of completion. The 45-day

timeframe allows for the filing of the travel voucher and receipt of the paid travel voucher. If orders and filing of a travel voucher are not required, then training files should be closed out much sooner. Employees are notified of the documentation required for closeout of their training file by a letter or email sent to them prior to the training.

Following is an explanation of the documentation and the reason it is required:

- Copy of TDY orders and any amendments. Orders are a required part of the training file and since all orders are not prepared by the CPO Training Office, a copy must be forwarded to us.
- Copy of the completion certificate. If a completion certificate was not received or is unavailable, a letter from the supervisor verifying attendance is sufficient. The completion certificate is required to ensure training was completed as scheduled.
- Copy of commercial air voucher. The commercial air voucher is required to complete the total training

expenses on the DD Form 1556 and in the computerized training record.

- Copy of the paid travel voucher. The paid travel voucher is required to complete the total training expenses on the DD Form 1556 and in the computerized training record.

If there are any questions, please contact the CPO Training Office at DSN 273-4083.

CONTINUED SERVICE AGREEMENT (CSA)

To justify the Air Force's substantial investment in training employees, a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) is required for all training that exceeds 80 hours. The period of obligation is at least three times the length of training. Employees must sign the CSA before training starts.

If an employee voluntarily leaves the Air Force before completing the period of obligation, they will reimburse the Air Force for tuition, travel, per diem, books and materials, fees and other related expenses (excluding salary) paid in connection with the training.

If an employee transfers to another agency, their CSA transfers with them.

If there are any questions, please contact the CPO Training Office at DSN 273-4083.



ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

Organizational design, also known as **position management**, is the assignment of missions to organizations and duties to positions, in a manner which ensures the mission is legally and properly accomplished, while making optimum use of manpower resources. This assignment of missions and duties is not an exact science. Each organization can be structured in many different ways - the key is to create the best design to meet all the organization's needs. Each arrangement of positions should take into consideration available funding, promotion opportunities, career ladders, efficiency of work, empowerment of employees, retention of good employees, needs of supervision and numerous

other factors. Before working with an organization's design, managers and supervisors need to understand the basics of position classification and the difference between position *classification* and position *management*.

Position classification is the analysis of duties and responsibilities of a position and the determination of proper pay plan, title, series, and grade based on comparison with standards issued by OPM. This is a combined responsibility of the Position Classification Specialists within your local Civilian Personnel Office or the [Air Force Personnel Center Directorate of Civilian Personnel Operations \(AFPC/DPC\)](#). Managers and supervisors have a part in this process when they ensure the duties assigned to each position are accurately described.

Position management comes into play when managers and supervisors actually assign specific duties to each position within their organization. How they distribute the duties among the different positions is what will ultimately determine the pay plan, title, series and grade of a position. Therefore, position

management authority resides with line managers. In this process, personnel specialists, along with representatives from Manpower and Financial Management, will function as advisers.

When establishing the structure of an organization, management should seek an optimum balance among several competing factors:

- Economy
- Productivity
- Skills Utilization
- Employee Development
- Employee Motivation
- Accountability
- Span of Control

Each of these factors should be looked at based on the nature of the work within the organization. In some cases, employee morale and motivation may be the key factors in counteracting a problem of high turnover. In other cases, productivity and saving money may be the bottom line.



The Air Force IDEA program provides a means for Air Force federal civilian employees to suggest improvements to current processes or procedures. These IDEAs, if approved for adoption, can result in monetary awards of \$200 to \$10,000. The IDEA should clearly state the current procedure, the proposed method, the cost of any new equipment, parts, or tools, and the benefits of the proposed method. Documentation should also be included to validate costs, stock numbers, and usage amounts, as well as any drawings or pictures that would enhance the evaluation of the IDEA.

Submit your IDEA on-line at:
<https://ipds.mont.disa.mil/>

Bumper Stickers of LIFE

- Where there's a will... I want to be in it
- **Ever stop to think, and forget to start again?**
- On the other hand, you have different fingers
 - **My reality check just bounced**
- Remember half the people you know are below average

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the following for approved IDEAS during this past Quarter (Jul - Sep 2005):

- Michael Maxwell,
127WG/PMEL, Selfridge ANGB
- Christopher Tvrdik,
148FW/PMEL, Duluth (2 suggestions)
- Michael Benko,
148FW/PMEL, Duluth
- Jon Dull, 148FW/PMEL, Duluth
- Karen Ducker,
148FW/PMEL, Duluth
- Randall Diem,
127WG/CEF, Selfridge ANGB
- Daniel Tankersley,
148FW/PMEL, Duluth



ANNUAL CFC CAMPAIGN

The 2005-2006 Combined Federal Campaign began Sep 1 for military installations located within the U.S. The campaign lasts six consecutive weeks from Sep 1 through Dec 15. The exact six-week period varies from installation to installation.

Last year's campaign totaled a record \$257 million in federal employee and military personnel donations.

PLEASE, GIVE GENEROUSLY!

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

AWARDS

QUALITY STEP INCREASES

Lindley Delidow (Selfridge ANGB)
Kevin Egger (Key Fld MS)
Edward Fish (Pease NH)
Craig Jaus (Pease NH)
Dwayne McKinney (Key Fld MS)
Paul Smith (Key Fld MS)
Karl Springer (Key Fld MS)

OUTSTANDING CIV CAREER SERVICE AWDS

Ralph Dorsch (SEADS, Tyndall AFB, FL)
William Shaw (Selfridge ANGB)

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT AWDS

Ferdinand Angeles (Otis ANGB)
Rachel Cummings (Otis ANGB)
Donald Schoenherr (Selfridge ANGB)

CATEGORY I CIVILIAN OF QUARTER (2ND QTR)

Richard Clark, McChord AFB WA)

CATEGORY II CIVILIAN OF QUARTER (2ND QTR)

Bruce Robie (McChord AFB WA)

COMMANDER'S COMMENDATION AWDS

Antoinette DeProspero (Rome NY)
Gerald Lee (Rome NY)

NEWCOMERS

Joseph Ancone (Rome NY)
DaleAnn Blythe (Selfridge ANGB)
Scott Brennan (Selfridge ANGB)
Felicia Brooks (1AF, Tyndall AFB, FL)
Joseph Castelli (Otis ANGB)
Deborah Cimmer (Portland OR)
Bradley Copeland, (1AF, Tyndall AFB FL)
Brian Cupp (Moffett Fld CA)
Larry Davidson (Portland OR)
Deborah Donovan (Cape Cod MA)
Nancy Jo Doubrava-Dull (Selfridge ANGB)
John Fill (Selfridge ANGB)
John Frost (Minot ND)
Shawn Hardiman (Otis ANGB)
Howard Hebdon (Portland OR)
Jacob King (Forbes KS)
Linda Madrid (SEADS, Tyndall AFB, FL)
Roger Montgomery (Forbes KS)
Guadalupe Mora (Moffett CA)
Alan Pionk (Selfridge ANGB)
Paul Rapisada (Klamath Falls OR)
Theresa Reed (1AF, Tyndall AFB FL)
Daniel Skeen (McChord AFB WA)
Desiree Teeple (McChord AFB WA)
Matthew Welsh (Selfridge ANGB)

LENGTH OF SERVICE

10 YEARS

William Kneller (Forbes KS)
Ronald Moore (Tucson AZ)
Brian Nelson (Selfridge)
Marc Pelletier (NEADS)
Jennifer Talon (Selfridge)

20 YEARS

Mary Ann Dewey (Selfridge)
Randall Diem (Selfridge)
Dennis Haan (Selfridge)
Mary Jo Laplante (Forbes)
Kimm Lupo (Selfridge)
Melvin McCracken (Selfridge)
Evelia Romero (Andrews)

30 YEARS

Donald Paulin (Selfridge)

RETIREMENTS

Ralph Dorsch (SEADS)
Philip Graber (WADS)
Randal Hamilton (Tyndall)
Edmund Jackson (Tyndall)
Roger Jenson (Otis ANGB)
Patricia Lala (NICI)
Patricia Malone (WADS)
Everett McDonald (Selfridge)
Mary Pace (Selfridge)
Peter Psikigios (Tyndall)
Robert Remmick (Moffett)
Willfried Thompson (Selfridge)

NGB - CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OFFICE

43237 Wake Street, Bldg 305

Mail Stop #07

Selfridge ANGB MI 48045-5029

AUTOMATED ATTENDANT VOICE SYSTEM: DSN 273-4700 OR 1-800-645-9416
(x4700)

HRO HOME PAGE: <http://www.miself.ang.af.mil/hro/cpohome.htm>

Labor & Employee Relations	CHRO.EMR.LMR@miself.ang.af.mil
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Classification	CHRO.classificatio.miself.ang.af.mil
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Recruiting	CHRO.recruiting@miself.ang.af.mil
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Training	CHRO.training@miself.ang.af.mil
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Systems	CHRO.systems@miself.ang.af.mil
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Manpower (IDEA)	CHRO.manpower@miself.ang.af.mil
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OFFICE FAX: 273-5115 273-4338

The Civilian Connection is published by NGB CHRO, Selfridge ANGB. Your comments and questions are welcome. Please address them to:

CHRO.manpower@miself.ang.af.mil

or

NGB-CHRO
43237 Wake Street, Bldg 305, Stop 07
Selfridge ANGB MI 48045-5029



Updated 5 Apr 05

From the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST)

BEST Telephone Menu

Stateside employees: **Dial 1-800-616-3775.**

Overseas employees: **Dial the toll-free AT&T Direct Access Number for the country you are in, then 800-616-3775. (AT&T direct access numbers are available at www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.)**

1. When the phone system answers, you will hear **"Welcome, and thank you for calling the Air Force Customer Service Center."** Listen carefully to the menu. Press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then 2 again for BEST benefits and entitlements services.

2. You will hear two tones and several seconds of silence while your call is being transferred. You'll then hear information on using your Social Security Number and Personal Identification Number to access your records and process benefits transactions.

3. Listen carefully, you will be prompted **"To enter your SSN and PIN, press 1; if you have forgotten your PIN, press 2."**

- If this is your **first** time accessing the system, after entering your SSN you will hear "please enter your **four-digit** Personal Identification Number or PIN." This is what we like to call your "BEST" or "benefits" PIN." We don't mail PIN numbers, they're automatically assigned when you are hired and are a four-digit number equivalent to your month and year of birth, for example, if born in September 1972, your PIN will be 0972.
- If this is **not** your first time accessing the system, you will hear "please enter your **six-digit** Personal Identification Number or PIN."
- If you have forgotten your six-digit PIN, press 2 to reset your PIN, and enter your SSN, date of birth, service computation date for leave, civilian pay plan, grade, and step. (This information can be found on your most recent Leave and Earnings Statement or SF 50.) You will then enter a new six-digit PIN.

4. You'll then hear **"Please hold while we verify this information."**

- If this is your **first** time accessing the system, you will then hear **"Please change your PIN to a six-digit number of your choice."**
- If **not** your first time accessing the system, you'll hear **"To change your PIN, press 1; to continue, press 2."**

5. You'll then hear **"The current duty phone number on file for you is _____."** If this is correct, press 1, otherwise press 2." (This is your commercial duty phone number, with area code. Overseas employees should exclude their country code.)

6. The system will then voice the benefits main menu, as set forth on the next page. **To contact a benefits counselor**, press the number for the benefits area you are calling about, then press zero to transfer to a counselor.

For Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB), press 1

- For general FEHB information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal FEHB information, press 2
- To elect new employee coverage, press 3

- To change from self and family to self only without changing your health plan, press 4
- To make an open season change or election, press 5
- To cancel your FEHB change or election, press 6
- To make a non-open season change or election, press 7
- To obtain a faxed copy of your most recent SF 2809, press 8
- To change your participation in the Premium Conversion program, or to transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Retirement**, press 2

- For general retirement information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal retirement information, press 2. (You may obtain the date you are first eligible for voluntary retirement in the personal information area.)
- For a retirement estimate, press 3
 - For a pre-calculated voluntary retirement estimate, press 1
 - For a real-time on-line estimate, press 2
 - For a TSP monthly annuity estimate, press 3
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)**, press 3

- For personal program information, press 1
- To enroll or change your TSP during open season, press 2
- To make a new employee election, press 3
- To stop your regular contributions to the TSP, press 4
- To elect, change, or stop TSP Catch-Up Contributions, press 5
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

For **Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI)**, press 4

- For general Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance information by fax-back, press 1
- For personal life insurance information, press 2
- To elect new employee coverage, press 3
- To make a non-open season election, change, or termination, press 4
- To make an open season election or change, press 5
- To transfer to a Benefits Counselor, press 0
- To return to the previous menu, press 9

To request a **Faxed Document**, press 6

To **Exit** the system, press 9